

his respiratory or pulmonary impairment did not arise out of, or in connection with, employment in a coal mine.

(3) The provisions of this paragraph shall apply where a miner was employed for 15 or more years in one or more of the Nation's underground coal mines; in one or more of the Nation's other coal mines where the environmental conditions were substantially similar to those in an underground coal mine; or in any combination of both.

(4) However, where the evidence shows a work history reflecting many years of such coal mine employment (although less than 15) as well as a severe lung impairment, such evidence may be considered, in the exercise of sound judgment, to establish entitlement in such case: *Provided*, That a mere showing of a respiratory or pulmonary impairment shall not be sufficient to establish such entitlement.

(c) *Other relevant evidence.* Even though the existence of pneumoconiosis is not established as provided in paragraph (a) or (b) of this section, a finding of death due to pneumoconiosis may be made if other relevant evidence establishes the existence of a totally disabling chronic respiratory or pulmonary impairment, and that such impairment arose out of employment in a coal mine. As used in this paragraph, the term *other relevant evidence* includes medical tests such as blood gas studies, electrocardiogram, pulmonary function studies, or physical performance tests, and any medical history, evidence submitted by the miner's physician, his spouse's affidavits, and in the case of a deceased miner, other appropriate affidavits of persons with knowledge of the individual's physical condition, and other supportive materials. In any event, no claim for benefits under part B of title IV of the Act shall be denied solely on the basis of a negative chest roentgenogram (X-ray).

§ 410.456 Determining origin of pneumoconiosis, including statutory presumption—survivor's claim.

(a) If a miner was employed for 10 years or more in the Nation's coal mines, and suffered from pneumoconiosis, it will be presumed, in the absence of persuasive evidence to the

contrary, that the pneumoconiosis arose out of such employment.

(b) In any other case, the claimant must submit the evidence necessary to establish that the pneumoconiosis from which the deceased miner suffered, arose out of employment in the Nation's coal mines. (See § 410.110 (h), (i), (j), (k), (l), and (m).)

§ 410.458 Irrebuttable presumption of death due to pneumoconiosis—survivor's claim.

There is an irrebuttable presumption that the death of a miner was due to pneumoconiosis if he suffered from a chronic dust disease of the lung which meets the requirements of § 410.418.

§ 410.462 Presumption relating to respirable disease.

(a) Even though the existence of pneumoconiosis as defined in § 410.110 (o)(1) is not established as provided in § 410.454(a), if a deceased miner was employed for 10 years or more in the Nation's coal mines and died from a respirable disease, it will be presumed, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that his death was due to pneumoconiosis arising out of employment in a coal mine.

(b) Death will be found due to a respirable disease when death is medically ascribed to a chronic dust disease, or to another chronic disease of the lung. Death will not be found due to a respirable disease where the disease reported does not suggest a reasonable possibility that death was due to pneumoconiosis. Where the evidence establishes that a deceased miner suffered from pneumoconiosis or a respirable disease and death may have been due to multiple causes, death will be found due to pneumoconiosis if it is not medically feasible to distinguish which disease caused death or specifically how much each disease contributed to causing death.

§ 410.470 Determination by nongovernmental organization or other governmental agency.

The decision of any nongovernmental organization or any other governmental agency that an individual is, or is not, disabled for purposes of any contract, schedule, regulation, or law, or